

A substance she knows all-too-well: hexavalent chromium.

The same substance, also known as chromium-6, is what Brockovich found in the water in Hinkley, Calif.

Brockovich is now known for leading that investigation, which Julia Roberts made famous nine years ago with her Academy award-winning portrayal of Brockovich in the film named after Brockovich.

"I never thought I'd see another Hinkley, California," Brockovich told **CBS News** in Midland, "but I'm afraid I might be wrong."

Hexavalent Chromium, Brockovich said, is now being found in significant amounts in the water of over 40 homes in Midland.

"The only difference between here and Hinkley," Brockovich said, "is that I saw higher levels here than I saw in Hinkley."

Midland resident Kay Say they knew something was wrong, and asked Brockovich to investigate.

"We didn't really understand why the water was yellow when we filled the pool," Saythre said.

That's when their and her neighbors learned their water is contaminated. Saythre's next door neighbor, Sheldon Johnson, and his wife are experiencing health problems. They have both been diagnosed with kidney problems.

"It's kind of odd that two members of the same household basically have the same problem," Johnson said.

Both Saythre and Johnson now have state-monitored filters on their water supply.

But the main concern for residents is finding the culprit.

Bob Bowcock, an environmental investigator, believes the source of the contamination is Schlumberger, an oil field services company.

The Early Show asked Schlumberger for comment, and the company said in a statement: "Chromium has not been used in any of the processes performed at the Schlumberger facilities in Midland, Texas, and independent water samplings indicate that the source is likely an adjacent site unrelated to our facilities."

No lawsuits have been filed and the state is still investigating. For now, the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality has told residents its priority is to identify the contaminated sites and provide clean water for people with chromium-6 contamination. Brockovich said the immediate concern for people in the contaminated areas is for their children.

"The children have so many unexplained problems," she said. "I sat down with a family ... and it was actually really heartwrenching. Their 7-year-old child has stomach tumors. They're very concerned that he had an unusual cancer ... and (the mother) is so frightened what the future holds for that child."

She added, "...In the long term (residents are) all terrified that they could come down with cancer."

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Following hits based upon google search for Erin Brockovich and Bob Bowcock and midland, tx.

Following information extracted 12/15/09 by Werner from the below web site:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2009/7/10/741331/-Erin-Brockovich-Does-Midland,-TX.-A-Community-Fracked-by-Big-Oil.->

Erin Brockovich Does Midland, TX. A Community Fracked by Big Oil.
by [TXsharon](#)

Fri Jul 10, 2009 at 09:34:07 AM PST

Imagine waking up one morning and having no safe water at all. In a recent radio program about [Peak Water](#), [Maude Barlow](#) said: The day will come--mark my words--when every single thing we do will be measured against what it does to water. For people in Midland, Texas, that day is here.

Hexavalent Chromium contamination is spreading in the groundwater used by some Midland, Texas residents and environmental investigators say the mounting evidence points to the oil and gas industry. Affected residents say they have proof that hydraulic fracture giant Schlumberger is responsible.

Erin Brockovich was in Midland investigating and her team is still in Midland. ([video](#)) "The only difference between here and Hinkley," Brockovich said, "is that I saw higher levels here than I saw in Hinkley."

In 2005, [at the urging of Dick Cheney](#), former Halliburton CEO, Congress exempt hydraulic fracking from the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) as part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This exemption is commonly known as the Halliburton Loophole because Halliburton earns about 1.5 billion annually from hydraulic fracturing. The

exemption allows hydraulic fracture giants like Halliburton and Schlumberger, to keep the chemicals they use secret.

[Hydraulic fracturing](#) is a process where 1 to 5 million gallons of potable water, mixed with chemicals and sand are pumped under pressure down the drilling hole to release the gas trapped deep in the earth. According to Victor Carrillo, Railroad Commission of Texas, [90% of all U.S. oil and gas wells undergo hydraulic fracturing](#) to stimulate the production of oil and gas.

Schlumberger denies responsibility and denies use of hexavalent chromium although it is commonly used in hydraulic fracturing compounds. [3M Oil and Gas](#) even offers protective gear (page 5) to protect oil field workers from exposure to hexavalent chromium in hydraulic fracturing fluid.

Bob Bowcock, an environmental engineer investigating the Midland County contamination with Brockovich said, "The culprit is definitely oilfield activity." In an earlier statement to [Big 2 News in Midland](#), Bowcock said Brockovich investigators have "evidence" that Schlumberger is to blame.

In Louisiana, Schlumberger was fracturing a Chesapeake Energy well when neighbors captured on video a yellowish-green substance sprayed on the ground in a nearby pasture full of cattle. [Sixteen of those cattle died](#) a gruesome death as neighbors watched. The investigation seems to be at a standstill.

In the meantime, over 40 families in Midland are without safe drinking water and the contamination, which has already spread 1.5 miles from ground zero, is spreading through the aquifer at 1000 feet per year.

Yesterday, I spoke with Sissy Sathre who is the unofficial point person for the Cotton Flats community in Midland and the one responsible for Erin Brockovich's involvement. Residents have water filters issued by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality but there are many problems with the filters including frequent failures. Residents fill a white bucket to test the color of their water before use. If it's yellowish-green, they know it's not safe to use.

Cotton Flats residents have many health problems including rashes, burning eyes, ear aches, head aches and cancer. Their animals also have health problems. Most residents are afraid to use their water even to wash dishes because of the residue. They use paper plates, reduce bathing and don't even allow their dogs or children to play outside for fear of stirring up contaminated dust.

Ninety-two percent of the 278 known chemicals used to produce natural gas have adverse health effects including endocrine disruption, neurological disorders and cancer. Chemical information is limited because the industry claims formulas are trade secrets.

"We want full disclosure.

And once the public hears the story, and they'll say: well why aren't we out there monitoring?

We can't monitor until we know what they're using. There's no way to monitor. You can't."

/~Dr. Theo Colborn, [The Endocrine Disruption Exchange](#)

Legislation is pending that will close the Halliburton Loophole, but we need more support for these bills. Please ask your member of Congress or Senator to co-sponsor these bills.

[S. 1215](#) - Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act

A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to repeal a certain exemption for hydraulic fracturing, and for other purposes.

[H.R. 2766](#) - Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act of 2009

To repeal the exemption for hydraulic fracturing in the Safe Drinking Water Act, and for other purposes.

Our Congress members are being misled by industry. ProPublica investigative reporter Abrahm Lustgarten [exposes industry](#) for their use of "fuzzy math" and misleading statements to confuse Congressional members. In the first quarter of 2009, the oil and gas industry spent \$44.5 million lobbying against regulation. Last year they spent \$129 million. In addition to lobby money, the industry PR machine is at full tilt. They're trying to claim that hydraulic fracturing regulation should remain at the state level and spinning it as a state's rights issue.

In the meantime, Cotton Flats residents know full well the meaning of "[Your Money of Your Life](#)" and they are hoping to soon have the essential ingredient to life: safe water.